

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Re: Commission Meeting September 3, 2013

Meeting was called to order at 5:31pm.

Attendance:

Present: Ron Bathrick, Paul Kottage, Kim Karlin, Donna Malley, Chris Orris, Michelle Spader.

Absent: Kristen Brandt, Lou Criscuolo, Marc Fasano.

Staff: First Selectman, Michael J. Freda

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Carla Riccio, Secretary

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the meeting held on June 4, 2013:

Paul Kottage made a motion to accept the Minutes of the June 4, 2013 meeting, seconded by Michelle Spader.

2. Correspondence:

None.

3. Old Business

None.

4. New Business:

Review of Proposed Idea for Utilization of Food Bank funds: Mr. Swinkoski and Mr. Freda brought an idea to the Commission for their discussion and approval for the use of funds that currently exist in the Emergency Food account. Selectman Freda explained that with the rise of requests for perishable goods as well as the fact that the fund is growing, what better time than to propose this idea. Additionally, Mr. Freda explained that he has learned that Community Services has been receiving more and more requests from residents for the need of perishable food items (i.e. milk, bread, eggs, produce), items that the food bank does not supply, nor can logistically accommodate. In these instances, Community Services has had to reach out to the local churches to assist in pooling their resources.

So in order to create an efficient process and to accommodate the residents, Mr. Freda brought the idea to the Commission of utilizing the Emergency Food account in order to purchase gift cards for residents seeking assistance for these perishable food items. Those residents seeking assistance would need to be income and asset eligible in order to qualify and would need to apply for Emergency Assistance, and go through the existing protocols in place. The commission felt that this was a reasonable idea.

A lengthy discussion ensued among the commissioners including the dollar amount of award, the logistics behind the distribution, tracking, funding and the guidelines for use of the funds.

After this discussion among the commission, it was determined that a household that wishes to apply for and qualify for emergency food assistance may receive the following: One (1) \$25.00 Stop and Shop gift card once a month for a rolling twelve (12) months.

The following stipulations were also determined: Grocery receipts must be returned within one business day that the gift card is issued. Gift cards are solely intended for the use of purchasing necessary perishable foods. Residents' failure to return the receipt, or use of gift cards to purchase inappropriate items (i.e. cigarettes, alcohol) will result in the resident's forfeiture of the program for the future. If a month (or months) elapse and an applicant does not request their monthly card, they will not be entitled to a gift card from these missed months. Based on unique circumstances, eligibility guidelines may be waived at the discretion of the Director of Community Services. A household is eligible to apply for emergency assistance once per year.

Based on these decisions made and parameters set, Paul Kottage made a motion to approve the idea seconded by Christine Orris. All were in favor.

a. Director's Report:

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Youth Services:

Project Graduation: Mr. Swinkoski provided a summary of Project Graduation figures from the 2013 event. Over the course of several months leading up to the event, a total amount of funds raised for the event was \$19,938.00. Of that total amount, approximately \$9,000 came from business donations, approximately \$2,000 from parent donations and 6,211.00 from a grant, and \$2,700 from ticket sales. Expenses for the event amounted to \$18,765. The event yielded a slight profit in the amount of approximately \$1,200.

Workforce Alliance: Mr. Swinkoski also provided a summary of the Workforce Alliance Summer Employment Program. This grant provided \$30,500 in State funding and \$2,500 in funds from DCF in order to employ 21 students with special needs and/or low income families who participated this summer. Students worked in various worksites in town including the North Haven Board of Education, Maintenance Department and Clerical Departments, North Haven Library, NHTV, Slamma Jamma Basketball Camp, North Haven Day Camp, Community Services Daycare, various playgrounds, Montowese Health Care, St. John's Church and Helping Hands.

Community Services:

Energy Assistance: Mr. Swinkoski announced that the 2013-2014 energy assistance season will be starting Monday, October 7th. A press release went out to the media that residents are now welcome to schedule their appointments to apply. Appointments will be available on Mondays (1-4pm) and Wednesdays (9am-12pm) in the Community Services office, located in the Town Hall Annex Building, 5 Linsley St. This service is available by appointment for North Haven residents.

Toy Donation: In June, a large donation of games made by residents Tim Shea, creator of the game "Reality." Community Services coordinated the distribution of 31 cases (12 games in each) to the High School, Middle School (one for each classroom), BHCare programs, Community services client distribution, Community Services counseling staff and Recreation summer programs

Mr. Swinkoski also reported that Dan Perrotto from Bikes for Babes donated 2 bicycles this week.

Outreach Assistance Applications: From May through August 2013, 10 households applied for Outreach Assistance. Ten households applied and were awarded assistance to pay for various recreational programs including various playground programs, summer school and school supplies. A total of \$1,485.00 was awarded through the Outreach Fund.

June-August 2013 Monetary Donations to Food Bank: Mr. Swinkoski reported no donations were made.

Food Donations: Mr. Swinkoski reported that a total of 4 boxes & 4 bags of food were donated in June 2013, 23 bags of food were donated in July 2013, and 1 box & 16 bags of food were donated in August 2013. Additionally, 243 meals were distributed (= 27 people) in June 2013, 495 meals were distributed (=55 people) in July 2013 and 342 meals were distributed (=38 people) in August 2013.

Counseling:

Mr. Swinkoski reported the current open client census at the North Haven Counseling Center is still approximately 175 clients. Group therapy offered over the summer included *Men Dealing with Life Transitions Group*, the *Men's Med Management Group* as well as the *Women's Processing Group*. Also the following two groups have begun being offered: *Dealing with the Stress of Chronic Health Issues and a Co-dependency Group*. The *Substance Abuse Recovery Group* will restart in September as well as starting a *Mindfulness and Stress Management Group* in September.

Daycare:

Mr. Swinkoski reported the current enrollment in both Daycare Programs. Preschool currently have 15 children (all slots are filled) with a waiting list of 10. All School Age slots are filled with a capacity of 30 children with a waiting list of 2.

Mr. Swinkoski responded to the question brought up by Chair Malley regarding the closure of the Moppet Minders Nursery School program. Mr. Swinkoski discussed the background and reasoning behind the closure of the program.

b. Finance Report:

Mr. Swinkoski distributed budget reports for (year ending June 2013) to the Commission for their review and welcomed any questions.

Community Services: EOY snapshot of Community Services expenditures:
\$40,664.21 over budget.
109.2% of budget expended.

Welfare: EOY snapshot of Welfare expenditures:
\$1,746.86 under budget.
41.8% of budget expended.

Senior Center: EOY snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:
\$15,871.40 over budget.
104.9% of budget expended.

Additionally, Mr. Swinkoski distributed budget reports for (ending July 2013) to the Commission for their review.

Community Services: YTD snapshot of Community Services expenditures:
6.4% of budget expended YTD.

Welfare: YTD snapshot of Welfare expenditures:
2.5% of budget expended YTD.

Senior Center: YTD snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:
8.3% of budget expended YTD.

Additionally, reports of the Daycare, Emergency Fund (Fund 204) and the Outreach Fund (Fund 304) (ending July 2013) were also distributed to the Commission for their review.

Emergency Fund (Fund 204): as of 7/31/2013:

Food: YTD Balance \$13,374.91

Fuel: YTD Balance \$11,005.81

Misc: YTD Balance \$36,165.24

Toys: YTD Balance \$1,266.92 (plus an additional \$600.00 in Toys R'Us gift cards)

Outreach Fund (Fund 304): as of 7/31/2013:

Service Outreach: YTD Balance: \$6,156.44

Project Graduation: YTD Balance: \$23,716.64

Sandy Hook Fund (to be turned over to Sandy Hook): Balance: \$4,756.12

Final Notes from First Selectman Freda:

“Trunk or Treat” Event: Mr. Freda shared with the Commission that based upon the success of the event in 2012, he has decided that Town will host another “Trunk or Treat” event again this year at the North Haven High School parking lot. Mr. Freda sought feedback from the Commission regarding this idea. Based upon the feedback, the Commission was in agreement that the event will take place on the Saturday before Halloween, October 26, 2013 (inclement weather date of 11/2/13). Mr. Freda will make the formal announcement at the next Board of Selectmen meeting and begin promoting the event via Facebook and the Town website.

DARE Program: Mr. Freda shared with the Commission that the Police Commission is currently contemplating moving the DARE Program to the 8th grade (currently being offered in the 5th grade). Ultimately this will be a Police Commission decision however Mr. Freda sought the feedback from the commissioners. Mr. Freda explained that he was considering proposing that the DARE Program be offered in BOTH 5th and 8th grade classes.

Prescription Takeback Program: In discussing issues relating to substance abuse, Mr. Freda mentioned to the Commission that the next prescription takeback program will be offered on October 26th. He welcomed any Commissioners who are interested in volunteering.

Parks Upgrading Project: Mr. Freda also shared with the Commission of the current mission of upgrading of the parks in town as well as the creation of a bike path at Grover Wyman Park to create a safe environment for children to ride their bikes. The bike path will be dedicated in honor to the late Connor Kusmit. Mr. Freda is also contemplating creating a BMX bike park in this same area. The goal is to create a destination for kids to ride their bikes, creating a safer environment.

5. Public Comment:

None.

6. Adjournment:

Kim Karlin made a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Paul Kottage. The meeting was adjourned at 6:17p.m. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 5, 2013 at 5:30pm.